

Japan's Justice Minister retracts war remarks

TOKYO, May 6: Facing widespread condemnation from other Asian nations, Justice Minister Shigeto Nagano on Friday retracted his remarks defending Japan's role in World War II, reports AP.

But several major political



Justice Minister Shigeto Nagano addressing a press conference. — AFP photo

BRIEFLY

NATO chief postpones US tour:

NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner has postponed indefinitely for "personal reasons" a planned visit to the United States next week, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation sources said Thursday, AFP reports from Brussels.

Woerner, who is 59 years old, was scheduled to meet President Bill Clinton as well as other US officials during the weeklong stay.

20 Kurds killed in Turkey: Twenty rebels of the banned Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and three government soldiers were killed in several clashes in Turkey's southeast region in the past 24 hours, an official statement said on Thursday, Xinhua reports from Ankara.

Emergency regional governor's office said that the government forces killed 12 PKK rebels in Genc town of Bingol province when they were carrying out an operation in the region.

Blast kills 3 in Moscow: A man detonated a bomb in his suitcase in a powerful explosion that killed him and two passersby in central Moscow on Thursday, AP reports from Moscow.

Two other people were injured in the 2:25 PM blast, Russian television and the Interfax news agency reported. Police said they suspected the motive was suicide since the man was carrying the suitcase when the bomb went off, but had no immediate proof, the reports said.

14 killed in Indian train mishap: Fourteen people were killed when a speeding train crashed into a jeep at a railroad crossing in southern India late Thursday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported yesterday, AFP reports from New Delhi.

Forty others were injured in the accident in Mehmaboob Nagar district in the coastal state of Andhra Pradesh, the news agency said.

Police said 18 people were travelling in the jeep.

Two US jets crash in S Korea: Two US air force jet fighters on a routine training mission crashed over the Yellow Sea Friday, US military officials said, AP reports from Seoul.

One pilot was rescued, the other was missing, said Jim Coles, spokesman of the US military command in Seoul. The condition of the rescued pilot was unknown.

The planes collided 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) off Boryong, a city on South Korea's west coast, over the Yellow Sea, the national Yonhap news agency said.

Police raid pro-apartheid bastions in Pretoria

JOHANNESBURG, May 6: The search warrants were issued in response to tips received Thursday. The investigators were looking for firearms, bomb-making devices, illegal broadcasting equipment and material from the defence forces, Johnson said.

The raids were part of an ongoing probe of the extremists, although not yet officially linked to the investigation into a string of bombings that killed 19 people and injured 170 as the country's first multiracial elections were beginning, said Capt Evan Johnson of the South African Police.

Law officers sealed off the compound of Radio Pretoria, an unlicensed station that served as a beacon for those opposed to South Africa's multiracial elections.

Police also raided the Wonderboom Fort, a historic site near Pretoria occupied since March 13 by a small band of commandos who ringed it with sandbags and razor wire.

Five homemade shotguns and two radios from the South African Defense Force were seized at the fort, Johnson said.

There was no resistance from the extremists, some of whom have vowed armed opposition to the transition to black majority rule.

There were no immediate reports of arrests.

Ramiz Alia, 9 others to go on trial

TIRANA, May 6: Ramiz Alia, Albania's last communist president and heir of Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha is to go on trial with nine others on charges of abuse of power, a Tirana district court spokesman said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Alia, former Prime Minister Adil Carcani, Manush Myftiu, a former deputy prime minister and Rita Marko, former vice president will also face charges of misappropriation of state property at the trial which will open on May 21, the spokesman said.

Justice Minister Shigeto Nagano addressing a press conference. — AFP photo

parties in Japan, including one in the ruling coalition, said the retraction was not enough and called on Nagano to resign.

Nagano had said Japan was not an aggressor in the war, and called the "rape of Nanking," in which Japanese soldiers massacred many thousands of Chinese civilians, a fabrication.

"My remarks the other day about past history were inappropriate," he told a news conference. "I would like to retract those comments."

China, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam denounced the remarks, made in an interview with the Mainichi newspaper published Wednesday.

Hata called Nagano's remarks inappropriate and telephoned Nagano Thursday night to reprimand him.

Anthony Lake, the president's national security ad-

viser, said that because "the needs for peacekeeping have outrun the resources for peacekeeping, it's important that we ask the tough questions" about when and where to support UN operations.

The reality is, we cannot often solve other people's problems; we can never build their nations for them," he told a White House briefing.

An effort has been underway since the early days of the Clinton administration to define circumstances under which the United States would participate in UN peacekeeping operations and to figure out a way to keep the cost

down.

The United States currently pays about 30 per cent of the cost of UN peacekeeping and Clinton has said he wants that figure reduced to 25 per cent.

The effort gained greater urgency after 18 US soldiers were killed Oct. 3 in Somalia.

After that incident, Clinton conceded that the United States had erred in allowing a UN-directed humanitarian mission become "a waging of conflict and a highly personalized battle."

Even before the deaths in Somalia, the administration into sharp criticism when it was disclosed its peacekeep-

ing plan would allow US combat troops to serve under foreign commanders.

The plan was quickly shelved after members of Congress denounced it as "a nutty idea" and unworkable.

Lake emphasized that US combat troops would never serve "under foreign commanders" although they might be part of a UN force that was under "foreign operational control."

The guidelines issued by the White House stated that "the president retains and will never relinquish command authority over US forces."

— AFP photo

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